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ABSTRACT

The primary goal of the Kentucky Needs Assessment Project is to develop methods of sampling and annually assessing the extent of learners' needs in Kentucky and to stimulate educational programming based on the reduction of learners' needs. The completed Phase I of the project was devoted to an identification of learners' needs and a determination of the criticality of those needs. Activities planned for Phase II are discussed in this report. These activities are aimed at the development of a method (test instruments and procedures) for making an annual assessment of the progress of schools in alleviating the specific learning needs of students. Criterion measures and the parallel assessment instruments will be restricted to "Learning Skills" in reading and mathematics in grades 4, 7, and 11. An attachment to the report provides Suggested Criteria for Determining the Quality of an Educational Needs Assessment Strategy. These criteria are outlined as to organizational strategy and operational strategy. Other attachments are map of Kentucky showing the distribution of sampling pilot school districts by regions as of December 18, 1970, as well as a tentative calendar of activities. (DB)

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PHASE II
THE KENTUCKY NEEDS ASSESSMENT STUDY

Pilot Project: Developing and Field Testing Performance Measures in Selected School Districts for School Year 1970-71.

Schools are receiving increasing criticism for the lack of firm evidence to prove that they are accomplishing those tasks to which they have been assigned. This criticism is being reflected in many ways: through adverse comments in the press and news media, through student unrest, through alienation of the school from its community, and through expressions of distrust and disagreement as reflected in the public's dislike to admit, many of these criticisms have a basis in fact and, therefore, should not be ignored. Perhaps, it is time to stop pretending that additional financial support will cure all our ills and enable us to meet such criticism with assurance. Perhaps there are some needs that can be met without additional massive funds. Perhaps we need to take inventory of our performance and, thereby, be able to provide our constituency with undeniable evidence that we can, indeed, be productive in the performance of our functions.

But, of course, we realize that we should be spurred to greater productivity simply because of our professional commitment toward improving the quality of educational programming and not entirely because we are experiencing severe criticism. If we have that commitment, even derogatory criticism will be regarded as informative and perhaps useful.

The Kentucky Needs Assessment Project has been designated to provide procedures for inventoring the performance of the schools of the Commonwealth. In concert with many of the other forty-nine states, Kentucky is seeking to:

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1) Identify what the public and profession regard as the needs of learners in the state.

2) Determine the criticality of these learner needs by applying judgmental values based on opinion and in keeping with the goals of schools in Kentucky.

3) Establish performance goals for the alleviation of critical learner needs and develop programs specifically geared toward the attainment of such goals.

4) Apply measures of accountability, based upon performance goals, to the progress of such programs.[1]

Phase I of the project, encompassing 1 and 2 above, has already been completed. (These two steps are reported in Kentucky Educational Needs Assessment Study Phase I, published by the Kentucky Department of Education, September, 1970.

To accomplish the goal of Phase II, the following activities will ensue:

1) A sample of school districts[2] will be selected to:

   (a) help develop and verify criterion measures (behavioral or performance objectives) keyed to the limited number of learners' needs selected for Phase II attack;

   (b) help develop and verify assessment instrument(s) containing test items which are based on the criterion measures; and

   (c) administer the assessment instrument(s) to a representative sample of students so that the instrument(s) may be validated and/or modified for further usage, and a perspective may be obtained concerning the precise extent of learners' needs.

2) Participating school districts will be assisted at the regional or state level by teams of consultants competent in both the development of criterion measures and the comstruction of test items and the format of student assessment instrument(s). Additionally, materials, phamplets, filmstrips, and tapes will be made available. Each of these school districts will be asked to form a team composed of a minimum of one each: elementary teacher, elementary principal, secondary teacher, secondary principal, and supervisor or central office curriculum worker.

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1. See Attachment 1
2. See Attachment 2

3) School district teams will be convened in each of the Title III regions to:

(a) provide advice and counsel in the writing of appropriate criterion measures.

(b) provide advice and counsel in the development of the assessment instrument(s).

(c) obtain information concerning the administration of the assessment instrument(s).

(d) provide advice and counsel in the modification of the assessment instrument(s) after they have been administered and scored.

Subject or Discipline Focus

Criterion measures and the parallel assessment instrument(s) will be restricted to the general learner need "Learning Skills," to the subject areas of reading and mathematics, and to grades 4, 7, and 11. This restriction is necessary for this experimental effort simply because of a lack of time and personnel. [3]

Future Efforts

The completion of Phase II of this project should result in the development of a method (test instruments and procedures) of making an annual assessment of the progress of schools in alleviating the specific learning needs of students. While the method will be but a tentative and experimental beginning toward what should result ultimately in a comprehensive method of assessing learners' status, it will represent a giant step toward educational accountability. Continued efforts during subsequent years should provide us with the experience and competence to achieve school programs that clearly meet the needs of learners.

While Phase II is a limited approach to the problem of accountability (limited to a sample of school districts, grade levels, students, and the subject areas of reading and

3. See Attachment 3. "Tentative Calendar of Activities."

mathematics) the project will be expanded considerably in future years. The benefits which should accrue from this total effort are obvious and need little elaboration.

Summarizing, the ultimate goal of the Kentucky Needs Assessment Project is to develop methods of sampling and annually assessing the extent of learners' needs in Kentucky, and to stimulate educational programming based on the reduction of learners' needs. Thus, the completed Phase I of the project--1969-70 school year--was devoted to an identification of learners' needs and a determination of the criticality of those needs. Now the 1970-71 year, Phase II has been designed to result in the development of experimental assessment instruments and procedures to be used in measuring the extent of a limited number of learners' needs in selected school districts this school year.

Attachment-1

SUGGESTED CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING THE QUALITY OF AN EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT STRATEGY[1]

I. Organizational Strategy

1. The overall concept of educational needs assessment defines an educational need as the difference between the current status of the learner and the desired learner outcomes.

2. The assessment strategy includes both long and short range objectives.

3. The strategy includes specific activities which have been designed to achieve each objective included in the strategy.

4. The strategy includes a time frame for accomplishing each activity.

5. The strategy is sufficiently constructed so as to consider all the required elements.

6. Student learning goals are established for the purpose of determining children's needs through the educational needs assessment.

7. The student learning goals are behaviorally stated and representative of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning.

8. The student learning goals are sufficiently refined to make them measurable objectives for student learning.

II. Operational Strategy

1. The strategy includes provisions for collecting data about student learning objectives into three categories:

   a) perceptions of the community (including business and industry) educators, and the learner, with regard to the relevance and importance of these objectives

   b) criterion based test instruments to determine the extent to which student learning objectives have been achieved, and

   c) relevant demographic data about the learner

2. The strategy includes provisions for a data sample from which validity can be determined. (that is, we are measuring what we purport to measure).

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1. Adapted from Educational Needs Assessment Guidelines prepared by U. S. Office of Education, 1970.

3. The strategy includes provisions for a data sample from which reliability can be determined. (that is, we are measuring accurately and consistently).

4. The needs assessment strategy includes provisions for collecting appropriate information on specific subpopulations?

5. The strategy includes provisions to assure that the data collected is manageable and current.

6. The instruments which are designed to collect data have been tested thoroughly on a pilot basis.

7. Procedures for analyzing data have been thoroughly tested to determine if all data collected can be appropriately utilized and treated.

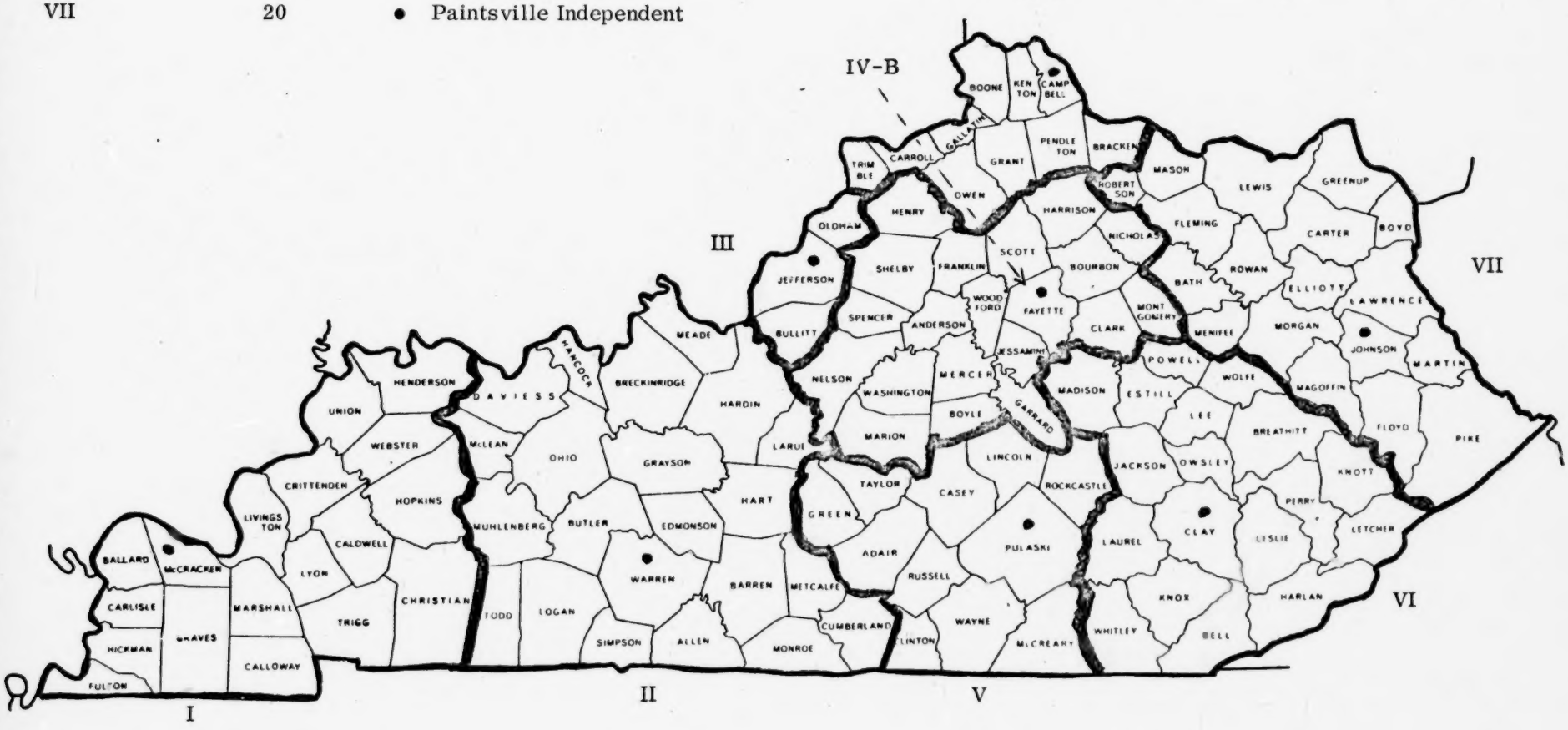
8. The conclusions drawn from the interpretation of data can be supported.

9. There are logical and defensible procedures established for determining criticality of educational needs identified by data for the State as a whole and for each distinct area of the State.

Attachment 2-A

Distribution of Sampling Pilot School Districts by Regions (as of Dec. 18, 1970)

Region	Counties	LEA of Record
I	18	• Paducah Independent
II	22	• Bowling Green Independent
III	3	• Louisville Independent
IV-A	9	• Campbell County
IV-B	19	• Fayette County
V	11	• Somerset Independent
VI	18	• Clay County
VII	20	• Paintsville Independent



Kentucky Title III (ESEA) Regional Educational Service Centers

Tentative Calendar of Activities

Schedule	Activities
During Second week of January; two-day back-to-back meetings, arrival evening before meeting date West Area-- Jan. 13-14, 1971	Two Orientation Meetings--West--4-6 participating districts per region in Regions I, II, III, and V West--two representatives each participating school district--school superintendent or designee and project director or liaison representative--assistant superintendent for instruction, general supervisor, or other. Date: January 13-14, 1971 (arrival for dinner meeting first day) Range of local district participants 32-48 Tentative Meeting Place--Park Mammoth Resort, Cave City
East Area-- Jan. 14-15, 1971	East--same representation and program format for Regions 4-A, 4-B, VI, and VII. Range of local participants 32-48 Tentative Meeting Place--Lexington
February One 3-day session for each Region	Training Workshops--District teams (5 persons) by Regions--Techniques of Writing Behavioral Objectives. Organizational and operational strategies.
March- April	State consultant assistance to individual districts on item development and procedures for field testing.
May	Finalizing Operational Steps: 1. Item collection, validation and approval by panel of teachers at respective grade levels 2. From validated items, a representative coordinating committee will select measurement items for administration in grades 4, 7, 11 to establish regional and state base-line data for 1970-71 3. LEA Project director or designee to administer learner needs survey instrument to a 20% random sample of pupils by class and grade levels assembled in an appropriate place without interrupting classroom schedule or teachers and non participating pupils.